

How do I learn student names?

Module focus

- learning and remembering student names

Module outcomes

- you will be familiar with techniques which allow you to remember names
- using students names in class can have a big impact on student engagement

'There seems to be a sea of faces in front of me. I will be teaching these people for the next 13 weeks. They all know who I am. Maybe if I could learn some of their names I might be able to get them more involved in class discussion.'

Take a moment to reflect on this issue.

What challenges does this pose for *your* teaching?

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Possible solutions

1. Try taking some scrap paper to your first tutorial class. Ask students to fold a sheet into a tent shape, write their name on it and place it on the table in front of them. Collect these place names and distribute them again in your next class.
2. Sending a 'sign in sheet' around every class allows you to identify people by where they sit, as they usually sit in roughly the same places, and with their friends.
3. When you hear a student's name, quickly record some distinguishing physical feature s/he has.

More help

Here are some resources from which you may seek some advice. They are all annotated so as to assist you in making judgements about what might be useful advice for your particular teaching context. By exploring some or all of these resources, you may well be able to generate strategies to suit your particular circumstances.

1. http://tutortraining.econ.usyd.edu.au/classroom_names.html - suggests some basic techniques tutors might use to help learn and remember student names.
2. http://trc.virginia.edu/Publications/Teaching_Concerns/Misc_Tips/Learn_Names.htm - several practical tips from the University of Virginia for helping you to learn and remember student names.
3. <http://tep.uoregon.edu/resources/faqs/managingclimate/lcnames.html> - includes some practical strategies for learning names in large classes.
4. http://www.delaneykirk.com/2006/07/we_spent_a_lot_.html - explains the READ techniques for remembering names.